

VZCZCXRO0435
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0899/01 1681453
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 161453Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1072
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000899

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG, NSC FOR BPITTMAN AND
HUDSON
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF ABYEI ROADMAP; SRSG EXPRESSES CONCERNS
ABOUT JOINT INTEGRATED UNITS AND LANDMINES

REF: A. KHARTOUM 889

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 859

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: President Bashir issued a decree June 15 implementing the legal framework for the Abyei agreement, but an administration has yet to be named or confirmed. Observers continue to disagree over which side got the better deal in the agreement, however everyone agrees that the process could be lengthy, leaving wide open the possibility of further conflict. UN/SRSG Qazi expressed concern that UNMIS does not have access to Joint Defense Board meetings that discuss deployment of the Joint Integrated Units, and also that the SPLA and possibly the SAF may have laid landmines outside of Abyei, which could endanger IDPs returning to Abyei town. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) In the first step toward implementing the June 8 NCP-SPLM Abyei Roadmap agreement (ref. a), on June 15 Sudan's Presidency codified the agreement's provisions on establishing an interim administration for the region. Paragraph 3 of the Roadmap provides that the Presidency would take such action within two weeks (i.e., by June 22). In accordance with the Roadmap, Presidential Decree 146 provides for an interim Chief Administrator, to be nominated by the SPLM, a Deputy, to be nominated by the NCP, and five department heads. All are to be drawn from residents of the Abyei region. The Decree also defines the region as that agreed to by the NCP and SPLM in the Roadmap and depicted by a map appended to the agreement. These boundaries are provisional, until a final determination of Abyei's boundaries is reached through arbitration.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In a meeting with CDA Fernandez June 16, NCP insider and Director of the Center for Strategic Studies Dr. Sayed al Khateeb said he believes that the current Abyei agreement "is the best that can be hoped for" given the breakdown in political dialogue between the two parties on the issue and expressed appreciation to SE Williamson for his assistance in the discussions that led to the agreement. Khateeb believes that arbitration was the only avenue left for the parties and seemed confident that the NCP will fare well in arbitration. By contrast, Khateeb said the 2004 Abyei protocol was a "huge mistake" and was agreed to at a time when both the NCP and the SPLM were "giddy" with the possibility of finalizing the CPA and were eager to trust the other side and international mediators like ABC chair Don Peterson "but we should have been more cynical."

[1](#)4. (SBU) Khateeb blamed SPLM Abyei representative Edward Lino for precipitating the recent problems in Abyei after his arrival in February 2008, but acknowledged that the Dinka and Misseriya had now taken matters into their own hands and that the NCP and the SPLM were no longer in full control of the situation. Khateeb expressed distrust of the Misseriya Arabs "who are only out for themselves" and want to retain power in both the South and the North to protect their interests - and have largely achieved it through the dual guarantees of freedom of movement and dual citizenship in the

agreement. He expected that the Misseriya will push for even more favors in Kordofan in return for their acceptance of the latest agreement.

15. (SBU) In a separate meeting June 16, UNMIS SRSG Ambassador Ashraf Qazi told CDA that "the SPLM might fare well in arbitration" but noted that the process could be lengthy and expressed concern about delays in other items in the CPA - such as elections. Qazi predicted that, as with other issues in Sudan, the parties will allow the situation to continue to fester and put off final settlement of Abyei as well as other CPA requirements such as border demarcation and elections, allowing the situation on the ground to reach another breaking point. "Conflict doesn't happen because it's rational," he noted, but rather because of frustration on the ground that gets out of control. Qazi observed that the rest of the border beyond Abyei still has not been demarcated and seems to have been dictated by power of force on the ground.

16. (SBU) Despite his concerns about the accord, Qazi noted that many in the SPLM "seemed giddy" about the agreement even though it seemed like something that could have been arrived at long ago. "The SPLM got a bloody nose in Abyei, their people had to flee, and so they had to play it up." He noted that, despite the rhetoric, Salva Kiir seemed diminished by the Abyei events as he had been by the supposed re-shuffling of the SPLM in May which in the end only confirmed the status quo.

17. (SBU) Qazi expressed particular frustration with UNMIS' lack of access to Joint Defense Board meetings when the Joint Integrated Units are discussed, and asked for US intervention with the GOS on this issue. (Note: Per the CPA, UNMIS does not have access to any JDB meetings; Qazi asked that UNMIS at least be allowed access when

KHARTOUM 00000899 002 OF 002

the JIUs are under discussion since UNMIS is supposed to assist with support to these units. End note.) Qazi also said that UNMIS still doesn't have free access to areas outside of Abyei town, and per the agreement UNMIS will not have access until the JIUs are in place, "SAF tells us they are still waiting for orders from Khartoum on what to do". He expressed concern that the parties will drag their feet putting the new JIUs into place, and urged that the US and other countries push for this to happen quickly.

18. (SBU) Qazi raised a final issue of considerable concern, that the SPLA - and perhaps also the SAF - had laid mines to protect their positions outside of Abyei town. Qazi was particularly concerned by information that that SPLA has laid mines south of town, since the IDPs in Agok and Turalei could potentially cross ill-defined mined areas on their way back to Abyei town. He noted that the SPLA has traditionally done a poor job in keeping track of its mines through other parts of the South. Qazi asked for US intervention with the SPLA on this issue.

19. (SBU) Finally, Qazi warned that the conflict over Abyei underscored the importance of the CPA and how its potential unraveling would affect all of Sudan, including Darfur. Given the tactics of brinksmanship employed by both sides, the possibility of miscalculation remains high and the first period of the CPA (2005-2008) "when they could ignore problems and kick them away for later" is almost over. The stakes are now higher and the margin for error grows ever narrower. "We need to constantly warn New York and Washington about the high possibility of further tension and violence as we get closer to these deadlines," he exclaimed. CDA heartily agreed.

110. (SBU) Comment: Post will raise the issue of the landmines with the SPLA/SPLM. If UNMIS' information is correct and mines have recently been laid, the damage has already been done and the SPLA must be urged to map the areas where mines were laid as soon as possible, and ensure that these areas are cordoned off. Post will also raise the issue of the JIUs with the GOS. The GOS has previously promised to include UNMIS in JDB meetings concerning the JIUs, and may simply need an additional push to follow up on these promises.

FERNANDEZ